

ABSTRACT

In a consumer information system, a method of comparing products and services including providing product specific information, providing merchant specific information on the specified product, providing merchant specific business information, providing product specific information collected by third parties, providing merchant specific information collected by third parties, applying weighting factors to the information provided, producing an aggregate value for each merchant based on the weighting factors as applied to the information provided, and producing a ranking of the merchants offering the specified product based on the aggregate value for each merchant. The system provides for consumers to select a set of standardized weighting factors or to modify the standardized weighting factors or to create their own weighting factors. The system provides detailed information to consumers on the breakdown of factors influencing the rating.